10: d'Orleans--261 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 501

"We are entering Laos itself, and shall soon be in a position to verify our observations. Nothing detains us here, [LSS: at Sop Nao] our coolies are paid and dismissed, and we have but to start. We find four pirogues sufficient for our party; they are about ten yards long, but narrower than those on the Black River; the awnings are higher, and bamboos tied to both sides of the boats make them balance more steadily. The boatmen use two kinds of oars, which they manage sometimes with the aid of a bamboo ring as a kind of rowlock, sometimes with both hands only. One oar is small and made in a single piece, the other is larger, and has a wooden blade fastened to it by small stems of bamboo. The sail of a windmill gives a very fair idea of it. A steersman uses a similar oar in the front of the boat, to guide the pirogue through the rapids."

10: d'Orleans--283 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 361, 501

"We still meet with fishing-rafts; but here the terraces support round huts with a rectangular opening in front; the bamboos are arranged above them to meet the current with a corner only, so that they should not catch the detritus, which would otherwise accumulate. From a distance, the effect of these buildings is rather like an enlarged beaver village, and we can imagine that the lacustral dwellings, of which so many remains are found in European lakes, must have resembled them closely.

We pass rafts laden with rice, in the middle two straw mats are connected by a roof; there is a little terrace in front and another at the back. The whole is fifteen yards long, and the Kas boatmen slowly row them down the stream."

10: d'Orleans--289 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 361, 501

[LSS: near Luang Prabang] "The river is 300 or 400 yards wide; the banks are steep but low, the villages are numerous and always surrounded by small woods, while sea gulls wheel and cry over our heads. Our boats travel slowly; the men have fastened the two pirogues side by side, and like our boys they are busy washing and dressing before they enter the city. At four o'clock we pass the Laotian Custom House on our left, and, thanks to our flag, we are not stopped."

10: d'Orleans--289-290 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 133, 441, 501, 563

"Lower down,[LSS: at Luang Prabang] lying against the river bank itself, immense rafts, real houses of thirty to forty yards long, carry stocks of merchandise and of various commodities, regularly [290] stacked one above the other. Chinamen live in these floating establishments.

The bank only rises some fifteen yards, and the shallow water scarcely hides a few sandbanks, while the calm powerful river flows on in a muddy stream more than 400 yards wide."

10: d'Orleans--365-366 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 501

"Our boat is large and comfortable, being a palace in comparison with the canoes of the Black River or the Nam Ou. A bamboo flooring is placed on two parallel canoes the [366]roof is high enough to permit one to stand erect beneath it. The whole with its three compartments, carries besides ourselves the interpreter, the boys, and eight oarsmen; four of whom are in the prow, while two have oars in the direction of the boat's axis to guide it when in the rapids. We quickly settle ourselves into this floating house, in one corner being our beds; while in the middle is a table and some chairs, and at one end an improvised oven, made of sand and stones, which serves as kitchen."

23: Franck--287-288 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 501

"We were off down the small river about seven next morning. To have started earlier, with a heavy fog filling the whole valley of a stream bristling with rocks and rapids, would have been dangerous. The king's son-in-law and I each had a boat, though I should have liked better to have had him with me, for the sake of information as well as companionship. The craft were what the French call pirogues, long and narrow, as slim and long in proportion as a lead-pencil, sharpened at both ends, and just about as easily turned over. They were frailly made of boards barely an inch thick, tied together with vines, with a prairie-schooner top of banana-leaves held in shape by a network of bamboo splints, and movable back and forth as sun, wind, rain, or lack thereof suggested; and mine had a raised platform with a mat in honor of my super-princely rank. It was of about the size, and the comfort, of its [288] antithesis, of the mule-litter of northern China, which it strangely resembled in its jerky overbalanced gait, teetering so incessantly that I could not even write rough notes in it. I had four boatmen, two at each of the slightly raised, distant, pencil-like ends of the craft, all wearing tattooed breeches but not much else. Sitting cross-legged and half pretending to paddle, these typical piroguiers of Luang Prabang seemed the personification of laziness, until one saw them in the rapids, the rock gorges, the genuine waterfalls they dare to shoot."

23: Franck--294 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 142, 501, 515

"Bamboo rafts, with little houses on them, made their way more slowly down the stream, so placid now that it mirrored the ever-lower hills densely covered with jungle-forest, networks of lianas, some trees completely shrouded in vines, whole hillsides of huge banana-plumes, flashes of birds across them. Women wearing nothing but skirts were getting water from the river; others, especially at sundown, were bathing themselves and their naked children. Bonzes in dirty yellow robes, loafing, or horse-playing to use up the energy their calling does not permit them to waste in work or domestic happiness, showed themselves here and there along the way. The people seemed darker, burned to an almost Madrasi color."

23: Franck--297 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 493, 501

"There were two Fords in Luang Prabang, that which had come for me at Don-mo and one belonging to the king. It would of course have been bad manners for the commissaire openly to emphasize his real bosshood by sporting the better car; besides, the garage mechanics of the capital are as inexperienced as filling-stations are rare; hence the transportation that had been placed at my disposal lacked something of the regality of its rival, particularly in the matter of diligent polishing. There were also some horses, a few elephants, several victorias, even three or four rickshaws, though these, except perhaps that of the king inside the palace grounds, might as well not have been imported, for there were no men in this languid Eden both able and willing to pull them. Nearly every one walks in Luang Prabang, barefooted and silent, unless he travels by boat. For the most important conveyances are the long narrow pirogues, some of them surprisingly large, hollowed out of single tree-trunks, which ply the Mekong and the Nam-khan that flows into it above the town. On the bow of each boat there is almost sure to be a bouquet of flowers, a pretty custom, even if it is probably based on a superstition, and one in keeping with this gentle people of a land so kindly treated by nature."

23: Franck--297-298 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 226, 501, 526

"Huge fish are caught in the Mekong, weighing a hundred and fifty, two hundred, sometimes even two hundred and fifty--not pounds, but kilograms, fish so big that it takes ten men to carry one of them and one man to carry a severed head. It is easy to understand what the flap of such a fish-tail sometimes means to the fishermen in their frail vine-tied canoes. But it is just the fishing for such a people in such a climate; for every time they catch a fish they can--and usually do--[298] rest for a week without going hungry. Racing pirogues as much as twenty paces long lie bottom up on bamboo-horses under little thatch roofs here and there upon the high weed-grown river-bank at the edge of the capital, being used only in November during the annual regattas. For rowing--more exactly paddling--is the athletic sport of Luang Prabang."

23: Franck--324-325 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 501, 505

"More exactly they are floating furnished houses, a combination of raft and boats surmounted by three or four rooms and servant quarters, two small windows on each side of the superstructure, and all those refinements one expects among such a comfort-loving people as the French. At high water these house-rafts can go down the Mekong in fewer days than are required for the overland trip through the jungle, though by no means so fast as I proposed to make it; and at all times this way of leaving Luang Prabang is so usual [325] that rarely does a Frenchman in the colonial service go by land. In fact most of those bound for the capital come up the river also, though that is a hard and tedious job--for the native boatmen. An official salary continues unabated irrespective of speed. Upon due reflection, no doubt, an income forever dragging at the heels of my personal exertions has much more to do with my weakness for hurrying than have any impressions on the transmigration of souls. This trip down the river is not only comfortable, but interesting and sometimes exciting, if not dangerous. The piroguiers say prayers and throw food into the air, or place it, as well as flowers, on the bow of the boat before passing bad rapids, that the unseen spirits may be propitiated. But on board, all the amenities of French civilization prevail, from whist to the three-cornered drama, and romance has culminated and domestic disaster befallen during these long and too restful journeys."

23: Franck--341 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 484, 501

"Down this shot now and then a man with only a loin-cloth over his tattooed thighs, riding a little green bamboo raft, the only part of the craft above water being a raised place for a bundle of a few clothes and other belongings, and a jackfruit for possible hunger."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

accustomed to use when asking potential converts if they were willing to accept Christianity. Thus, by his linguistic industry, the Father had done no more than bring his religion into secret ridicule; while the Meos, at least, are not likely to have felt anything other than slight bewilderment at the evangelist's quite unintelligible discourse.

Laos, they said at Saigon, was happily free from those disorders that made travel so chancy in the rest of Indo-China. The only difficulty was getting to Laos. Once you got there all was well, and there was nothing to stop you going about the country as much as you liked.

This account proved to be cruelly fictitious. You left Vientiane in the same way as you came — by plane. Either that, or you waited an indefinite time for the military convoy which provisioned Xien-Khouang in the north and the posts between — islands in perilous seas. The only way to get to Luang Prabang, the second of the ancient capitals of the country, which was about 300 miles away up the Mekong — or about 250 miles across country — was by one of the occasional motor pirogues. It now remained to find out what were the possibilities of making the trip in this way.

Providing myself with a Chinese interpreter — the pirogues being, of course, Chinese owned — I went down to the river. By walking a mile or two along the thirty-feet-deep bank you came to a place where the main stream floundered over from the Siamese side, so that a few barely connected stagnant puddles lay directly beneath. In one of these the pirogue lay, cracking in the sun and seemingly abandoned. It was an ugly, shapeless craft; a small junk, with its deck-space entirely covered over with a kind of hutment, so that travellers were confined to a stinking semi-darkness for the duration of their journey. It was arranged so that air and light could be kept out by the lowering of rush-matting screens over the few apertures in the sides.

A few corpse-like figures lay strewn about the fore-shore and the

149: Reinach--la G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 1. [Frontispiece] Laotian boatman.

149: Reinach--47a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 19 /p. 65/ The launch Argus between Tar-Val and Tar-Liou, in 1891.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--50a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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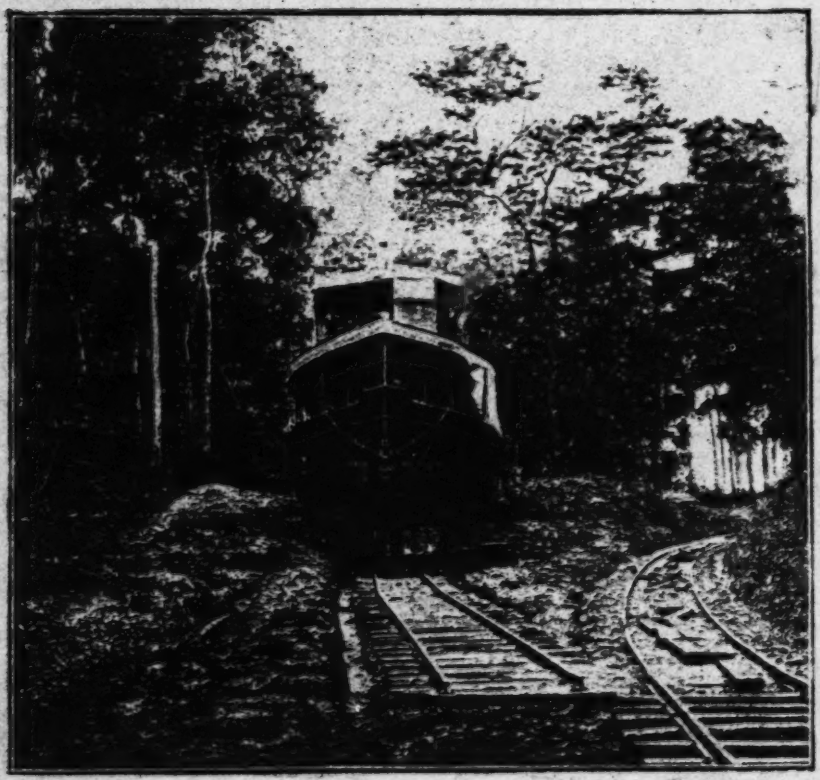

Fig. 20 /p. 70/ The Garcerie crossing the island of Khone from one reach to another (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--50b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 21 /p. 71/ A critical moment--the passage of the Trentinian across the island of Khone (1897). (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

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149: Reinach--52a G-3 (no date)1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 22/p. 75/ The Garcerie in the tidal dock at South Khone. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

527 Those desirous of obtaining special graces give similar celebrations
182 which last several days and several nights, and the offerings are more beautiful and more varied. It is generally on occasions of this sort that assumptions of the habit by bonzes and their pupils are particularly likely to occur.

Being present at these ceremonies confers certain indulgences, and that is why they are so punctually followed and why all those who take part try [224] to help in celebrating them by offerings of all sorts.

[196] On the spot where the celebration is to be held, a sort of pulpit is constructed beforehand where the bonzes stand as they come up by turns to read passages chosen for the occasion from the sacred books. They never allow themselves to be disturbed by the surrounding noise, but stand as if transfixed in the middle of the songs and shouts.

It is readily understandable that this should be an agreeable way to procure one's salvation, but since it is very costly it is not within everyone's means. Fortunately, there are ways of compromising with [565] heaven which enable even the poorest to associate themselves in these great celebrations, in accordance with their resources, by means of even very modest offerings and to benefit therefrom both spiritually and materially.

There is no doubt but that a belief in the efficacy of plenary and partial indulgences enters into their consideration, but it is equally reasonable to suppose that the attraction of the profane pleasures which one enjoys in the course of these gatherings is not the least of the motivating causes which lead the Laotian people to frequent them so zealously.

[71] Pirogue races. We have seen that pirogue races and regattas took place during some of the legal holidays, and a few words of
526 explanation on this matter are given below.
501 This custom must have been introduced by the Malays and then handed down from the Kmers to the Laotians, following an ascending direction from south to north.

The pirogues used in the "Souang-Hua" (1) regattas are specially

(1) Literally, pirogues which run.

built and exclusively reserved for this use. Sometimes as much as twenty-five meters in length, they are hewn out of specially chosen wood and have most elegant delicate and elongated lines. Their extremities are armed with what appear to be slender gilded horns. The exterior is lacquered black with gold ornamentation and the

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inside is lacquered red.

The pirogues are manned by forty or fifty oarsmen who half [225] [Illustration] [226] [Blank page] [227] crouch and half sit in pairs on what amount to thwarts made of bamboo and joined to a framework. The oarsmen face forward as they paddle, holding their blade in both hands and not supporting it on any point of the boat. A pirogue chief, usually a mandarin, is in the prow, and in the stern is the pilot, who jumps about and stimulates the whole crew with his shouts and gestures. Amidships there are sometimes musicians, with kene, gong and tom-tom, and two or three trained men who, their belts [Illustration here] adorned with enormous jointed "lingams," dance the "Phallic" standing up with their feet on the edges of the pirogue and declaim occasional odes and improvisations the terms of which are extremely crude.(1). In their songs they invite beings,

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(1) In southern Laos the men who perform these dances hold grotesque masks in front of their faces with their hands.

plants and elements to unite, combine and fertilize one another so as to maintain "Life" in all its forms on the surface of the earth.

The crews of the different racing pirogues are clothed in different colors, like the jackets of our jockeys, and they vie ardently with one another, making the water fly to surpass their own efforts. The crew which reaches the finish line first manifests its enthusiasm by [228] standing up in the pirogue, uttering shouts of triumph and brandishing the oars. Oftentimes all these uncoordinated movements result in throwing everybody into the water, but the pirogue is soon righted and emptied to the accompaniment of roars of laughter and the crew members take up their posts again, ready for a new race.

Racing pirogues are not launched until the time when they are to be used. Ordinarily they are stored on sawhorses and under sheds on the grounds of certain pagodas whose bonzes are responsible for their upkeep, and for storing the oars and accessories and clothing of the oarsmen.

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Certain pirogues are held in common by the inhabitants of a village, while others are the property of particular rich men, muong chiefs or high mandarins who have had them built at their own expense and pay for their upkeep and for that of their crew of oarsmen. In Laos a man will become the owner of a racing pirogue as in France one might become the owner of a racing stable. The racehorse

149: Reinach--170a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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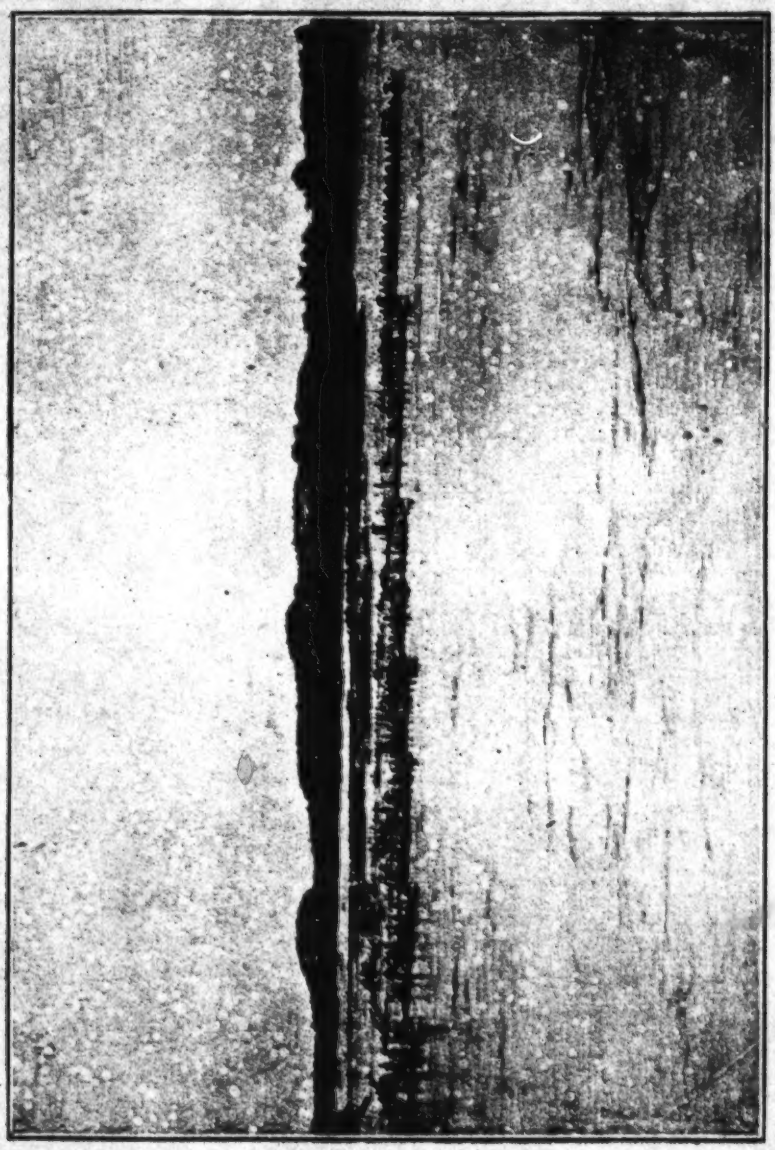

Fig. 55 /p. 225/ Feast of the Great Oath. Racing pirogues at Khong (October 4, 1898).

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Fig. 56 /p. 227/ Pirogue races at Khong.

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[525]
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Tribal Tai

s the long pirogue, and the jockeys are the oarsmen. Nor will it be n vain to remark that, as in our races, heavy wagers are often laid by the owners and the lovers of this kind of sport.

Thais or Phou-Thais. The Thais or Phou-Thais are divided into four distinct groups. These are:

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1. The Khao-Thais (white);
2. The Dam-Thais (black);
3. The Deng-Thais (red);
4. The Neua-Thais (northern).

The Khao-Thais are the result of marriages between Chinese men and Dam-Thai women, or vice versa, although the former case is the most frequent. They do not form large agglomerations, but only isolated family groups in the midst of the surrounding population. They are found only in the northern part of the Sib-Song-Chau-Thais, a territory which is dependent on Laos from the ethnographic point of view but administratively attached to Tonkin.

The following is what is known of their origin: [229] [Illustration] [230] [Blank page] [231]

"Around 1600 a rebel Chinese leader assembled a few partisans, set sail from Canton and landed at Haiphong. From there he went on to Bac-Ninh, continually increasing the number of his men. At Bac-Ninh the rebel leader received an envoy from the king of Annam, who asked him to help put down the Thais and the Muongs of the Black River. The Chinese leader accepted, and after leaving Bac-Ninh he went to Lao-Kay, from which point he soon entered the province of the Sib-Sing-Chau-Thais. After defeating the Thais and the Muongs he was given this province out of gratitude for his help. His troops, worn out by the campaign, settled in the country and lost no time in marrying Thai women. It was from such unions that the white Thais were born" (1).

(1) E. Picanon, op. cit. [Le Laos français, Paris, 1901.]

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Dam-Thais and Deng-Thais. These two varieties have a common origin and belong to the same family (2). The different names which

(2) Thais are found in nearly all of Laos, where they are scattered among the Laotian population. They are particularly numerous in the Hua-Pahn, where they are in the majority in certain muongs.

149: Reinach--192a G-8 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 78 /p. 271/ A pirogue convoy setting out on the Mekong.

149: Reinach--243a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
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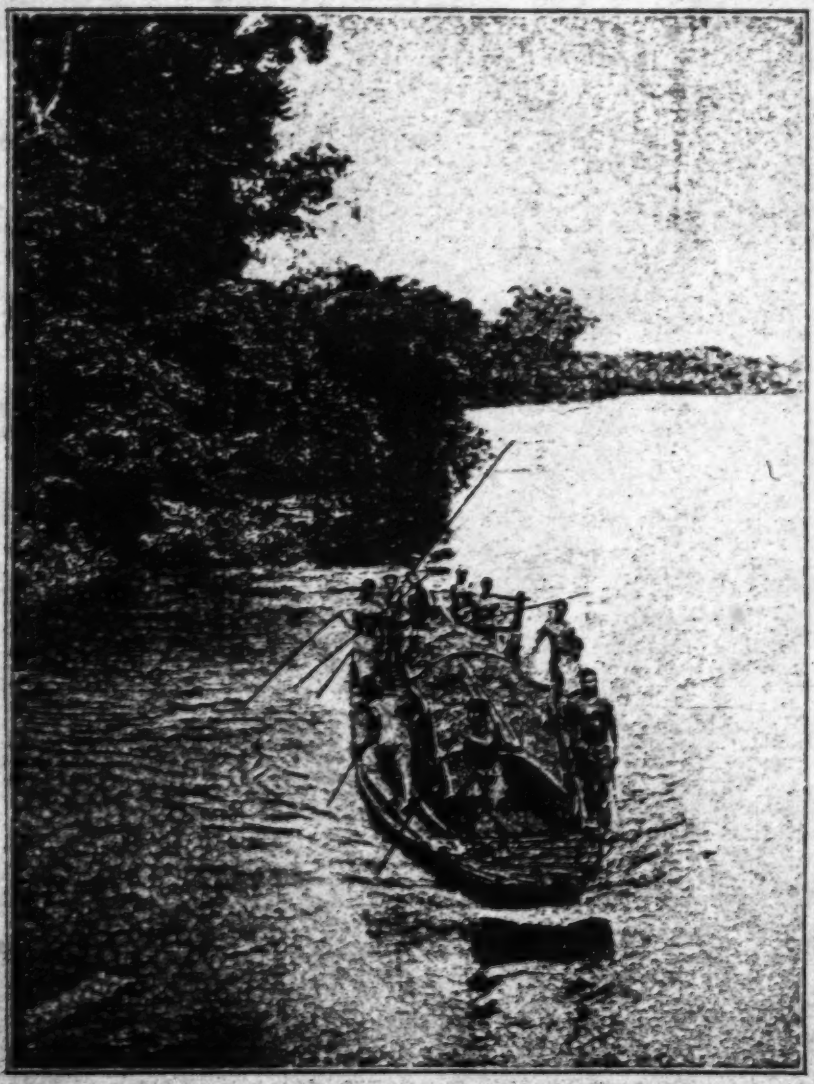

Fig. 88 /p. 331/ Pirogue going up the Mekong. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

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19. Miscellaneous resins.

Several trees, such as the "Kok-Mai-Niang, Kok-Mai-Tabeng, [Illustration here] Kok-Mai-Sak" (1), etc., yield an oleo-resin which,

(1) See Appendix XX.

when mixed with paddy husks, is used to make torches and a siccative, shiny extract which is called "Nam-Mane-Niang," and again a kind of pitch (Khi-Si) which is used to caulk pirogues and to smear various basketwork receptacles so as to make them watertight. It is similar to damarine.

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The production of these resins is limited to local needs.

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20. Black lacquer.

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The black lacquer of Laos is a natural black varnish, thick and [343] solid, which is called "Nam-Kieng." It is secreted by the "Kok-Mai-Nam-Kieng."

Nam-Kieng is used to lacquer racing pirogues, elephant palanquins, pagoda columns and statues, frames, receptacles of different kinds, sword sheaths, etc. The lacquer producing trees grow only in certain localities, and the varnish is not exported. Its price varies throughout the land between 62 and 75 francs per hundred kilograms.

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It would be of interest to identify this lacquer with that of Japan, and to study the question as to whether it might not be possible to increase the number of trees which produce it with a view towards making it the basis of an export trade, at least to the countries bordering on Laos.

21. Cunao (the mock gambier, Mak-Soua in Laotian).

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The cunao is a brownish tubercle used instead of catechu, the color of which it has, for dyeing cloth. It is found in Cammon, in a part of the Hua-Pahn and on the right bank of the Nam-Hou. This product is bought mainly by Annamites and Chinese, who use it in Annam and Tonkin for dyeing the peasants' work clothes.

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149: Reinach--250a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
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Fig. 88 /p.342/ Racing pirogue.

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Fig. 89 /p. 350/ Fishing for the "Pa-Phon" on the Mekong.

149: Reinach--315a G-8 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochine
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Fig. 103 /p.427/ Administration launches. The "Haiphong" and the "Ham-Luong."

149; Reinach--317a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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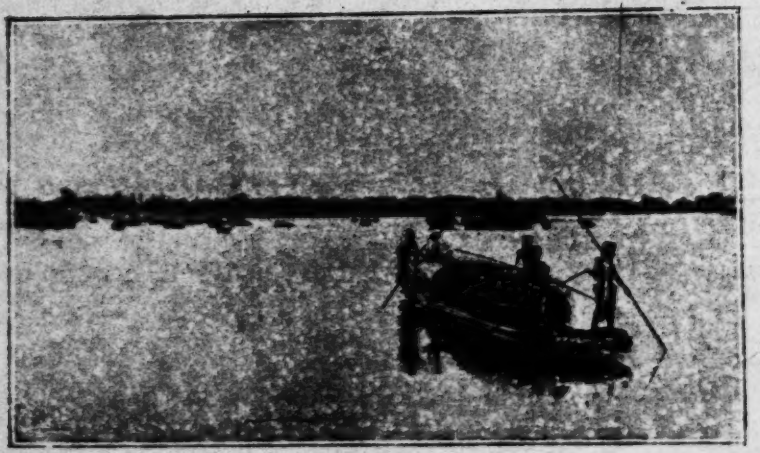

Fig. 104 /p. 431/ Pirogue going up the Mekong.

492 and some are even trained to trot. It may be reckoned that the average distance covered daily by a team of two oxen, on flat ground, naturally, is from 15 to 20 kilometers.

501 505 2. BY WATER. Besides the natural method of floating, or of floating improved by bamboo air jackets (used for rough timber), steamships, pirogues and rafts are used in Laos for trips and for transport.

Steamships. The steamships in Laos at present are:

1. The Lagrandière, a 100 metric ton gunboat which is at present immobilized at Xieng-Kok, just above Xieng-Lap.

2. The fleet of the superior residency, including the Argus, the Haiphong and the Ham-Luong.

3. The commercial fleet of the Cochinchina River Merchant Fleet Company [Compagnie des Messageries fluviales de Cochinchine], composed of the following ships: the Trentinian, the Colombert, the Garcerie and the Vien-Tiane, each of 105 tons' burthen, and the Massie of 100 tons (1).

(1) See Appendix XXX.

Pirogues. Pirogues are used for trips and for transporting merchandise, particularly in an upriver direction.

There are pirogues on the Mekong and its chief tributaries which are capable of covering great distances and which vary in size and in tonnage. They are from 10 to 25 meters long and can transport from 1 to 6 tons of merchandise. Depending on their size and the difficulty of the journey, these pirogues are manned by a sufficient number of men, generally varying from four to ten. [445] They are maneuvered by oars and poles going downstream, and by poles and towlines going upstream.

Rafts. There are two kinds of rafts. Some are formed of two pirogues which are joined side by side, covered with a floor and lightened on the sides by packets of bamboo, while the others are composed solely of bundles of bamboo which are solidly joined and then covered with a floor. Both kinds are used going downstream only. The former are dismounted when the journey is over. [Illustration here] The pieces of bamboo are removed, and the disjoined pirogues are ready to go back upstream separately.

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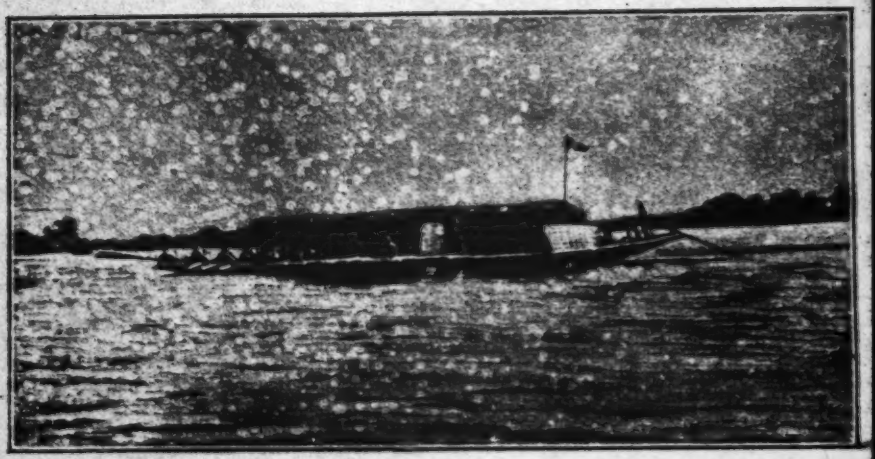

Fig. 106 /p.445/ Raft descending the Mekong.

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The rafts which are composed solely of bamboo are demolished upon their arrival, and the material which went into them is sold for various uses, particularly for making tiles of crushed bamboo.

Depending on their dimensions the rafts made up of two pirogues will have a crew of six to twelve men, who also serve as pirogue boatmen on the return trip.

The bamboo rafts have a similar crew, although their progress is necessarily much slower than that of the above rafts.

The following is a list of the various kinds of pirogues and rafts used in Laos:

149: Reinach--335 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina Laotians AM8

[446] Types of pirogues	Size in meters	Capacity	Stops	Usual course	Periods of navigation
Rafts (Phe)	30	200 to 250 piculs or 12 to 15 tons	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane, etc.	Xieng-Khong to Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay. Nong-Khay to Saphai, Bassac and Khong	All year in north Laos. March to June in south Laos.
Large pirogues with packets of bamboo on the sides (Hua-Ob).	20	60 to 100 piculs, or 3600 kilograms to 6 tons.	Same	Same	
Large pirogues. Those which go from Bassac to Pnom-Penh are called Hua-Khmen.	15	60 to 100 piculs, or 3600 kilograms to 6 tons.	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane, Bassac and Khong.	Xieng-Khong to Savannakhet. Bassac to Pnom-Penh.	May to October in northern Laos. May and June in southern Laos.
Large pirogues. Those which go from Oubone to Bassac and Khong are called Hua-Moun.	12	40 to 50 piculs, or 2400 kilograms to 3 tons.	Xieng-Khong, Luang-Prabang, Nong-Khay, Vien Tiane and Oubone.	Oubone to Champ and Bassac	(a) Laotian pirogues: August for the salt trade. (b) Chinese pirogues: all year.

149: Reinach--336 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochine
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Types of pirogues	Size in meters	Capacity	Stops	Usual course	Periods of navigation
Medium pirogues. (Hua-Vieng).	10	30 to 40 piculs, or 1800 to 2400 kilo-grams.	All points on the Mekong and its tributaries.	Various courses (ad libitum).	All year.
Small pirogues (Touk-He). Fishing pirogues or those which make short trips from one village to another.	6 to 8	8 to 15 piculs, or 500 to 1000 kilo-grams			

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Fig. 107 /p. 450/ The Trentinian and the Massie of the River Merchant Fleet /Messageries fluviales/. (Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--353a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 110 /p.466/ A racing pirogue.

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Fig. 115 /p. 485/ The arrival of the Bassac at South Khone.

149: Reinach--390a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 124 /p. 519/ Bonzes navigating on the Mekong.